

Life as a whole is suffering just as Jesus was the suffering servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12

10 - PROMISES OF EMPOWERMENT IN SUFFERING, DELIVERANCE AND PROVISION

Persecution began 64 AD

#1 - FUTURE GLORY (Romans 8:18-19)

57 AD

56 AD – 2 Cor.4:17 "beyond all comparison" (ESV)

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.

In 57 AD, Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, assuring them that our sufferings in this life are not comparable to the glory we will experience in the age to come. Just as we experience suffering within ourselves now, Paul says the coming glory also "will be revealed in us."

But the glory will not be manifested in us alone. It will also be seen throughout creation itself, as Paul declares: "creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed." This statement makes it clear that the coming glory is not merely an escape plan for us alone or some kind of eternal spiritual bliss we will experience individually. It will be instead the victorious return of the physically resurrected children of God into a renewed creation ruling here in glory and victory.

However, Paul makes it explicitly clear that this is a future state, and our current reality is very different. Right now we experience "sufferings". We are not given a promise, but a perspective. We are not told that if we pray and have faith, these sufferings will be removed in this present age. We were not given a promise, but a perspective.

58 59

Not Worth Comparing Instead, we are given a perspective that we can use to anchor our souls. We are commanded to never imagine that what we suffer now could possibly outweigh the blessings we will receive in time to come. We must remember that "our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory" promised for our future.

So, what kind of sufferings might Paul be referring to when he talks about things we will face in the present age, that are completely insignificant in light of God's plans and purpose for us? He provides a few examples from his own life and from those he ministered to.

With far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

- 2 Corinthians11:23-28

[Paul and Barnabus] returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

- Acts 14:21-22

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;

we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 8:37-39

These passages list some of the sufferings Paul and others faced, and also reveal his attitude toward those sufferings, based on his confidence in the security in God's rest. In his soul, Paul knew both that he was serving the Lord now and that he would be rewarded in eternity when the Lord's glory was manifested in him.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

- 2 Timothy 4:6-8

I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

- 2 Timothy 1:12

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

"unseen" is
"By Faith" in Heb.11:1-3

61

60

What Kinds

Sufferings?